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SUBJECT: FORMER MININSTER OF EDUCATION NAMED NEW MININSTER OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

¶1. (U) Summary: Newly-elected President Jacob Zuma has appointed former Minister of Education Naledi Pandor as the new Minister for Science and Technology. Long-standing Deputy Minister Derek Andre Hanekom remains in place, as do key officials in the quasi-governmental S&T entities. No major changes are expected in S&T policies. End Summary.

Pandor Has Experience, But Not in Science and Technology

¶2. (U) President Jacob Zuma has nominated former Minister of Education Naledi Grace Mandisa Pandor as Minister for Science and Technology. She was appointed Minister of Education in 2004 and served in that position until this May. In 2002 she became the first woman Chancellor of Cape Technikon University.

¶3. (U) Pandor received a Bachelor's degree in history and English from then University of Botswana and Swaziland (UBS) in 1977. (Note. The University of Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho was founded in 1964 to reduce the three countries' reliance on tertiary education in apartheid-era South Africa. Lesotho withdrew from the partnership in 1975 to establish its own national university. On December 31, 1981, UBS was amicably divided into two separate national universities. End Note.) Pandor completed her Master Degree in English at the University of London in 1978, and obtained a Masters of General Linguistics from the University of Stellenbosch in 1997.

¶4. (U) Pandor was an Associate Director of the Academic Support Program at the University of Cape Town (UCT) from 1992 - 1993, and a senior lecturer and coordinator of UCT's English for Academic Purposes Program from 1989 to 1991. She was Head of the English Department at Taung College of Education in 1986, and a senior lecturer there from 1984 to 1986.

¶5. (U) Pandor served as National Director of the Black Management Forum in 1993, and Executive Director of the Desmond Tutu Educational Trust in 1993-1994. She was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1994 and served as ANC Deputy Whip in 1995.

Key S&T Players Remain in Place

¶6. (U) Key officials in the Ministry and the quasi-governmental agencies remain in place. Derek Andre Hanekom remains as Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, having served in that position since April 2004. He has been a member of the ANC National Executive Committee since 1994.

¶7. (U) Hanekom graduated from high school in Cape Town in 1970. He has taken several non-degree courses in economics, land and agricultural policy.

¶8. (U) Hanekom was a full-time farmer from 1978 to 1983. He began his political life in 1976 by participating in a candlelight demonstration at Police Headquarters in Johannesburg. He was arrested in 1983, along with his wife and spent 9 months in prison awaiting trial for high treason. He was imprisoned for two years for the lesser charge of possessing banned materials.

¶9. (U) Hanekom acted as Coordinator of the Administrative Training Project (ATP), an NGO providing support to churches and trade unions from 1986 to 1987. He went into exile in Zimbabwe in 1988, returning in 1990 to act as coordinator of the ANC Land and Agricultural Desk, responsible for agricultural policy matters. He served as Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs from 1994 to 1999, and as Member of Parliament from 1999 to 2004. While Minister of Agriculture he piloted various reform bills through Parliament to Qof Agriculture he piloted various reform bills through Parliament to redress the effect of apartheid laws.

¶10. (U) There have been no changes in the leadership of the National Research Foundation (NRF). Acting Chief Executive Officer and Vice-President Dr. Albert van Jaarsveld will remain, along with Vice-President of Research Infrastructure Dr. Gatsha Mazithulela, Executive Director for Knowledge Management and Evaluation Dr. Daisy Selematsela, Executive Director for Knowledge Fields Development Dr. Andrew Kaniki, Executive Director for New Business Development Dr. Rocky Skeef, and Executive Director for Institutional Capacity Development Dr. Romila Maharaj. Dr. van Jaarsveld served as Dean of the Science Faculty at the University of Stellenbosch until January 2007 when he joined the NRF. His previous appointments include positions at the University of Pretoria, and Adjunct Professor of Environmental Studies at Dartmouth. His research interests include conservation and biocomplexity. He has published over one hundred primary papers, including works cited in Science and Nature

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magazines.

¶11. (U) No major changes are expected at the Council for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR). Dr. Sibusiso Sibisi remains as President and CEO, a position he has held since January 2002. He held the position of Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at UCT prior to his CSIR appointment. Dr. Sibisi holds a PhD in physics from Cambridge University and was a research professor at that University in 1989. He was a Fulbright Fellow at California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in 1984. He began his academic career as a in a research position at the University of Witwatersrand Department of Computational and Applied Mathematics in ¶1984.

DST Contacts See Advantages in Pandor's Political Connections

¶12. (U) DST working staff does not see Pandor's lack of S&T credentials as a problem because she is an experienced Minister. DST contacts comment that Pandor will probably initiate new science development programs, especially in the education arena. They note that she has championed educational reform aimed at improving the quality of math and science teaching at lower levels so that high school students will be prepared for universities. One contact notes that Pandor has been interacting with the broader scientific community as part of this process and thus has a familiarity with some S&T groups.

Comment: Few Substantive S&T Policy Changes Expected

¶13. (SBU) Comment. Naledi Pandor is the first S&T Minister from the ANC. This may mean that her initiatives will be implemented with greater success than those of her predecessors Mosibudi Mangena, who came from the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), and Ben Ngubane, who came from the Inkatha Freedom party (IFP). Pandor is expected to push for better science education at the primary and high school levels. No major policy shifts are expected in S&T issues. End Comment.

La Lime